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Simple dodecahedrons of *fluorite* are very rare. They have recently been found in the department of Puy de Dome, France.

The proof of the identity of two species is as important as the discovery of a new one. Descloiseaux and Koksharow have recently shown by crystallographic measurements that *vauquelinite* and *laxmanite* are identical. Laxmanite had been distinguished from the vauquelinite of Siberia by Nordenskiöld in 1867, under the impression that the more lustrous crystals, of somewhat different form and brighter green color belonged to a distinct species.

Kieserite, a sulphate of magnesia found in the Stassfurt salt mines, when placed in water is broken up into a crystalline meal, which, on exposure to the air, sets to a hard, cement-like mass. It has been used as a cement. It has been shown that the formation of the cement is due merely to the compression of the mineral upon drying.

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.¹

THE CAROLINE ARCHIPELAGO. — The Caroline Islands have recently been visited by the British war steamer *Emerald*. Her commander, Captain Maxwell, reports his arrival at Strong Island on June 25, 1881. He describes it as mountainous with lofty peaks, some 2000 feet above sea-level, clothed with verdure to the summits; bread-fruit, bananas, etc., grow in abundance, but cocoa-nuts are far less plentiful than in the low coral islands, and, owing to the bountiful supply of water, they are not much needed. The ancient walls and fortifications on the small island of Lélé, where the king lives, are very extraordinary. The walls are some twenty feet high, having been in former times probably as high everywhere, and twelve feet thick, and are built of enormous basaltic rocks which must have been brought from a distance, and have cost much labor and ingenuity to raise them to their present position. The natives of Strong Island are described as a most gentle, amiable and intelligent race; they are lighter in complexion than the Marshall islanders. Captain Maxwell afterwards visited Ponafi, or Ascension Island, in the Simavina group, the population of which is stated to be 5000. This island is divided into several districts each of which has its own chief. The natives are particularly pleasant and good-looking; Captain Maxwell thinks they have more refined features than any he has seen, but they are not so well dressed or advanced as the inhabitants of Strong Island—the grass petticoat, indeed, seemed to be the principal article of clothing. The island is about fourteen miles square and very beautiful, with lofty peaks from 2000 feet

¹ Edited by ELLIS H. YARNALL, Philadelphia.

to nearly 3000 feet high, which are wooded to their summits, and is surrounded by coral reefs with pretty detached islets; all sorts of fruits and vegetables grow there in abundance. The ruins of residences of former chiefs are numerous and consist of enclosures within enclosures, with walls in some places thirty feet high and upwards of twelve feet thick, built of great basaltic prisms (many of them twelve feet by two feet six inches), laid regularly tier upon tier; each tier being at right angles to the one below, and the interstices filled in with coral and rubble.¹

THE PAMIR.—The Russian traveler, M. Severtsof, gives the following results of his last journey in the Pamir: The Pamir is not a table-land and has no steppe region up to the height of about 12,000 feet. Up to an elevation of some 14,000 feet, the rivers flow in valleys which never exceed about thirteen miles in width. This peculiarity occurs also in the Tien Shan and Tibet where narrow valleys are found at a considerable elevation. There are, however, no lofty plateaux in the Pamir, where the mountains rise in lofty ridges 6000 or 7000 feet above the level of the valleys. In the Pamir mountain system, M. Severtsof states that 19,000 feet above the level of the sea is often reached, while three mountain groups attain an absolute elevation of 25,000 feet. He says, however, that these elevations do not alter the generally symmetrical character of the Inner Pamir. The mountain lines stretch in the direction of the meridian, and seldom strike out at right angles, in which respect they resemble those in the Tibetan system, while in the Tien Shan there is a tendency to parallel ranges. M. Severtsof is of the opinion from the evidence he obtained, that in the Inner Pamir the groundwork of the system, the elevation, which in 12,000 years has risen 600 feet, is still going on.

ALASKA.—Mr. E. W. Nelson has recently returned to Washington after four years spent in Alaska, chiefly at the U. S. Signal Station at St. Michaels, on Norton Sound, where he was sent by the Smithsonian Institution to study the meteorology and natural history of the region. The New York *Herald* states that he has made exhaustive researches in the mammalogy, ornithology and ichthyology, as well as in the ethnology and physical geography of the surrounding country. He made extensive sledge journeys and obtained a very valuable collection of Eskimo implements and utensils, and has brought back with him many water-color sketches of birds and fish, photographs, and also much information concerning the language and life of the Western Eskimo.

POLAR STATIONS.—The Austrians are making active preparations to establish their polar station at Jan Mayen.

The Germans have appointed a commission to make the neces-

¹ Royal Geographical Society *Proceedings*, February, 1882.

sary arrangements for the erection of their station, while the Russians, having already, as previously mentioned, dispatched their expedition to the mouth of the Lena, are fitting out another to go to Novaya Zemlya.

The Dutch also expect to continue their explorations in the Arctic seas.

DR. CREVAUX IN SOUTH AMERICA.—Dr. Crevaux, the French explorer in the Guianas and the basin of the Amazon, has been dispatched by his government on another journey. He is accompanied by an astronomer and other assistants. He proposed to ascend the Paraguay River to the headwaters of the Amazon, and to make a thorough exploration of the Tapajos tributary.

The Emperor of Brazil having placed a steamer at his disposal, he has decided to proceed up the River Pilcomayo to ascertain the practicability of a trade route between the Bolivian interior and the Argentine Confederation.

AFRICAN EXPLORATION.—The Marquis Antinori, the leader of the Italian expedition in Shoa, has heard of the existence of a race of pigmies to the south-east of Kaffa. It is thought probable they belong to the same race as the Akkas. The Marquis expects to return to Europe soon. He has made, during his five years residence in Africa, a large ornithological and entomological collection. He says that the natives distinguish clearly between the true leopard, the gepard (*Cynailurus guttata*) and *Pardus varius*, but that there is a fourth species, called by them "abasambo," and apparently intermediate between the lion and the leopard.

Mr. Schuwer writes to the *Mittheilungen* stating that he never intended to cross Africa from north to south, as has been reported. Fadasi, according to him, lies in N. lat. $9^{\circ} 48'$, or forty-three miles north of the position given by Marno.

The *Academy* states that Captain Cecchi has returned from Northeast Africa, and it is expected that he will shortly give an account of his travels in the Galla country, where he visited the Gurangué tribe, previously unknown to Europeans. He describes them as the most handsome and intelligent of the races in Eastern Africa. They are surrounded by the Gallas, against whom they defend themselves vigorously. A tradition respecting Christianity exists among them, and further research may perhaps discover ancient Ethiopian MSS.

The Russian African Expedition, of which mention was made in our last number, intends to explore the Liba rivers of West Africa, forming a station at the island of Fernando Po. After this region has been explored, the party proposes to continue their journey across the continent to the Uganda and Galla countries.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.—The French Scientific Expedition on board the *Travailleur*, and of which M. Milne-Edwards was the head, has been recently exploring the western portion of the Mediterranean. The seas off the coasts of Provence and Corsica were carefully explored to a depth of over 8700 feet, and after dredging between Spain and the Balearic Islands, the *Travailleur* put into Tangier, which was the point of departure for the second part of the voyage in the Atlantic Ocean. The numerous soundings and dredgings off the coast of Portugal produced some remarkable results, as they revealed the presence, at a depth of from 4900 to 5900 feet, of large fishes of the shark family which exist there in large numbers without ever coming to the surface. In returning to Rochefort, the greatest depth which has ever been found in the seas of Europe, was obtained by the dredge in $44^{\circ} 48' 30''$ N. lat., $4^{\circ} 40' 15''$ W., viz., 16,733 feet. A great number of foraminifera and radiolaria, several crustacea and an annelid were found in the mud here brought up by the dredge. As regards the Mediterranean, the *Travailleur* expedition has proved that this sea has no fauna of its own, this want being supplied by immigration from the Atlantic Ocean.

The Russian scientific expedition to the mouth of the Obi, has determined a number of positions astronomically. The eastern coast line of the gulf has been found to be placed from twenty to twenty-five kilometers too far to the east on the maps. If a similar correction is to be applied to the west coast, it will make the Yamal peninsula very narrow.

It is estimated that a third of Asia and a thirtieth part of Europe still remains to be explored.

Colonel Prejevalsky is actively engaged on his great work on Tibet and China, the first volume of which will be published in May with a map.

Nature notices the Journal of the Geographical Society of Tokio. It is printed wholly in the Japanese characters. It contains a paper on Saghalin and the Kurile Islands, and one on the historical geography of Japan.

MICROSCOPY.¹

THE NEW TRICHINOSCOPE.—So long as the detection of trichinæ in the flesh of animals used for food was solely a scientific curiosity and sanitary precaution, it naturally devolved upon scientific students to whose instruments and skill it presented no difficulties whatever; but when by depreciating, to a great extent falsely, the market value of a staple article of food, and inter-

¹ This department is edited by Dr. R. H. WARD, Troy, N. Y.